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E . S . C . A . P . E

ENHANCING SENIORS' COMPETENCIES
FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN EUROPE

Guidelines for E-Participation of Senior Citizens



ESCAPE: Enhancing Seniors' Competencies for Active Participation in Europe

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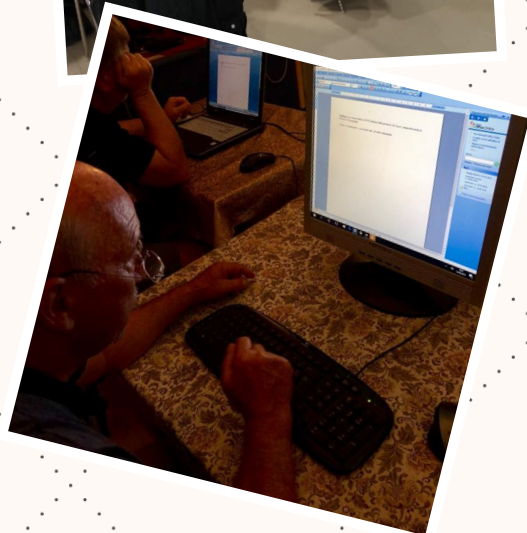
This brochure has been realised in the frame of the project "ESCAPE:
Enhancing Seniors' Competencies for Active Participation in Europe"

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About Erasmus +

Erasmus+ is the **EU Programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport** for the period 2014-2020. Education, training, youth and sport can make a major contribution to help tackle socio-economic changes, the key challenges that Europe will be facing until the end of the decade and to support the implementation of the European policy agenda for growth, jobs, equity and social inclusion.

The Programme shall contribute to the achievement of:

- 1.the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, including the headline education target;
- 2.the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), including the corresponding benchmarks;
- 3.the sustainable development of Partner Countries in the field of higher education;
- 4.the overall objectives of the EU Youth Strategy (framework for European cooperation in the youth field);
- 5.the objective of developing the European dimension in sport, in particular grassroots sport, in line with the EU work plan for sport;
- 6.the promotion of European values in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union³.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH

Strategic Partnerships aim to support the development, transfer and/or implementation of innovative practices as well as the implementation of joint initiatives promoting cooperation, peer learning and exchanges of experience at European level.



Introduction

The last Eurobarometer on Participative Democracy shows that people in different age groups demonstrate preferences for using different means of expressing their views on public and European issues. Younger respondents are more likely to use the Internet or social media: 42% of 15-24 year old did this during the past two years, but this falls to 17% among people aged 55 or over. Today the EU has developed many tools for the citizens willing to have their say at EU level. If the young generation is very active in this European e-participation, the citizens aged 50+ are generally cut off from this opportunity. The lack of digital competences is one of the main reasons why the seniors have a low level of knowledge of the existing European Tools for Citizen's Participation. Most of the 30% of all the Europeans who are digitally illiterate are older people. This percentage increases when considering disadvantaged seniors, living in rural and deprived areas.

At a European level, digital literacy is nowadays considered as one of the essential skills to allow citizens to effectively exercise full active citizenship. What is more, a wide percentage of adults still need the right skills and attitudes for using digital technology and therefore to exploit the opportunities that it provides, in term of citizens' participation.



To face this challenge of E-participation of the seniors in Europe, three organizations decided to gather to make their digital education approach an effective way to include them in the European democratic life.

Partnership

ITALY

1


Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa Associazione Culturale

 <https://www.fattoriapugliesediffusa.it/>



2

FRANCE
E-Seniors

<http://www.eseniors.eu/> 



3

SPAIN
Universidad de Castilla - La Mancha

 <https://www.uclm.es/>





About ESCAPE

ESCAPE: Enhancing Seniors' Competencies for Active Participation in Europe" is a 24 months project, involving 3 different organizations coming from Italy, Spain and France, working in 3 different but interconnectable sectors: senior education, ICTs, Eu Participatory Democracy.

The Strategic Partnership started from sharing best practices and, thanks to a participative and inclusive implementation of the project, it led to the definition of a new Educational Approach for promoting senior 50+ E-Participation in EU.

Senior citizens, especially those facing economic and geographical obstacles, would like to have their say at local but also at EU level. Their experience would really help Europe in becoming closer to the needs of its citizens. How to do so? The only way is to use the existing European Participatory Democracy Tools (EU Elections, Citizens' Initiatives, Citizens' Dialogue, Petitions,) and maybe to propose new ones. This requires a certain knowledge of the use of ICTs.

How to help these seniors in taking actively part to the construction of the Future of Europe? Thanks to a Methodological Approach, which take into consideration three elements at the same time: Participatory E-Democracy, Adult Education, Digital Education. During the project there were organized 3 International meetings, 3 Study Visits and 1 Training Course, together with local educational activities in three Countries, with the involvement of 180 senior learners.

The E-Book is
AVAILABLE
for
EVERYONE

who is interested to experiment it in its own context, eventually adapt it and bring benefits to its senior learners and to the EU itself.

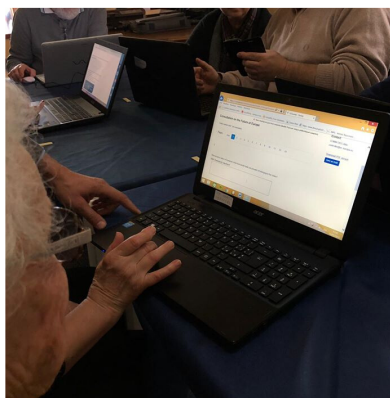
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Experts, educators and trainers from
3 different countries met during the 3
Transnational Project Meetings

Participants



Experts, educators and
trainers attended at
the International
Activities in 3 different
countries (study visits
& training courses)



3 Key Elements



1

EU Participatory Democracy Tools

What is Participatory Democracy ?

The European Commission mentioned participatory democracy for the first time in a 2000 policy consultation on a stronger partnership with NGOs, followed by the White Paper on Governance (which provides a general framework and strategic orientation on how to bring the EU closer to the citizens). The Participatory Democracy in EU can succeed if 2 conditions are met:

- The processes are open to the general public
- They are effectively structured to have a real effect on the policy outcome

For this project, these 4 EU Tools were considered:

Consultations

*Citizens
Initiative*

*Citizens
Dialogue*

Petitions



Consultations

Through public consultations citizens can express their views on the scope, priorities and added value of EU action for new initiatives, or evaluations of existing policies and laws.


The consultation is part of the ongoing debate on the future of the EU at 27, launched with the Commission's White Paper of 1 March 2017. People can already submit their views online on the White Paper, and today's consultation will further complement this.



TOOLS OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Citizens are invited to contribute to the *online consultation* drafted by citizens themselves. Getting involved in this consultation they have the chance to express their concerns, hopes and expectations about the future of the EU. This is not about drafting EU rules and regulations. This is about *making our voice heard by EU leaders*, to help them steer the right priorities for the years ahead. The questionnaire was created by a Panel of citizens selected on a random basis. It complements other initiatives from the European Commission on the Future of Europe.



https://ec.europa.eu/commission/future-europe/consultation-future-europe_en

The European Citizens' Initiative is a unique and innovative way for citizens to shape Europe by calling on the European Commission to make a legislative proposal. Once an initiative gathers 1 million signatures, the Commission decides on what follow-up action to take.

An initiative enables citizens from different member states to come together around an issue close to their heart with a view to influencing EU policy-making.

Citizens Initiative



<https://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome>

how to?

1. Form a "citizens' committee" composed of at least 7 EU citizens being resident in at least 7 different member states.
2. The members of the citizens' committee must be EU citizens old enough to vote in the European Parliament elections.
3. Citizens' initiatives can't be run by organizations.
4. The citizens' committee must register its initiative on the website before starting to collect statements of support from citizens. Once the registration is confirmed, organizers have one year to collect signatures.
5. Once an initiative gathers 1 million signatures with minimum thresholds (minimum number of signatories per member state) reached in at least 7 countries, the European Commission must decide whether or not to take action.



https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/get-involved/citizens-dialogues_en



"to be politically active in the Member States and in dialogues with citizens, by presenting and communicating the common agenda, listening to ideas and engaging with stakeholders"
- Jean-Claude Juncker



FUTURE OF EUROPE

Citizens' Dialogues are public debates with European Commissioners and other EU decision-makers, such as members of the European Parliament, national, regional and local politicians.

The events take the form of a question and answer session. It's your chance to ask EU politicians questions, make comments and tell them how EU policies affect you. You can also share your ideas on the future of Europe.

Held in cities across the EU, the sessions are free to attend and many are broadcast live online.



https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/citizens-dialogues_en

Objective

to ensure that you have the opportunity to communicate with the Parliament and express your right to petition, which is one of the fundamental rights of all European citizens and residents, enshrined both in the Treaty and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

If you wish to submit a petition in 'paper' form, there is no form to be filled in or standard format to be followed.

YOUR PETITION MUST:

- bear your name, nationality and permanent address (in the case of a group petition, it must bear the name, nationality and permanent address of the presenter or, at least, the first signatory);
- be signed.

Petitions

Your petition may include attachments, including copies of any supporting documents you may have.



The petition could be sent to:

*Chair of the Petitions Committee
European Parliament
B-1047 BRUSSELS*

In all cases petitioners are informed at each stage of the petition process, and receive a letter from the chairman informing them of the outcome.



<https://petiport.secure.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/home>

2

TIPS & TRICKS

Adult Education

*Senior Classroom
Educational Programme*



All elderly people have not only the right to be beneficiaries, but also to be active agents, participants and protagonists for social, cultural and scientific development of the society in which we live. It is necessary to take actions and initiatives which promote the rights of adults to participate and take an active part in developing the community we live in.

About Adult Education



The teaching approach to the Senior Classroom educational programme is to incorporate academic university methods, adapting them to the special needs of adults over 50/55 years, which prioritize active participation of the students in the learning process, with no requirement for prior certification with the final production of a non-competitive title. It is a form of high programmatic flexibility. The methodology has been developed through the experience gathered in the classroom by expert teachers. This training is formal, socio-cultural and socio-educational, meeting older learners' needs.

It is essential that lifelong learning could answer to new needs and opportunities to face the challenges that are emerging day by day. Having cleared the philosophy of such programs, which has a marked sociocultural character, away from interest in purely academic compilation of knowledge, we highlight that the methodology on which it is based is self-learning. The philosophy of the Classrooms for the Elderly lays on the "pleasure of learning." Of this way, the flexibility in learning is guaranteed. It's about a teaching-learning process where the itinerary goes consolidating to the extent that students' progress in knowledge, deciding on this task the direction of the learning path and the intensity at which it will take place.

There are three dimensions of the interrelated educational field and they are oriented to the personal development:

- **Basic learning:** Knowledge set, values, skills and attitudes, indispensable for the entire population, that allow to develop effectively in life and serve as support to continue training as well as to enable a dialogue with the environmental culture and actively participate in the society.
- **Work life training:** Understand the initial professional training as well as the updating of the labor knowledge.
- **Education for civic, social and cultural participation:** Ability to act together with others that implies donation and responsibility.



Needs Satisfaction

- Offer socio-educational activities based on student interests.
- Promote continuous and ongoing training for the full development of adults.
- Take advantage of the cultural wealth of the elderly to enhance their self-worth and self-esteem.
- Facilitate volunteering and mutual help as factors favoring solidarity and coexistence.
- Promote artistic and creative activities that encourage the use of their free time.
- Promote intergenerational relationships, thus facilitating tolerance.

Keep in mind that that these programs are a real cultural and formative alternative for any adult learners class, because they don't consider aspects, such as age, social and cultural backgrounds, economic and educational limits, but they respond to the training criteria throughout life, as well as to the challenges and requests of the society.

Objectives of the Training Programs

1. Contribute to the personal development, never finished, of the elderly from a scientific and cultural proposal.
2. Seek a natural space to establish new friendships.
3. Promote intergenerational integration and remove negative stereotypes about aging and youth.
4. Mutual enrichment.
5. Open a new field to researchers.

Criteria of training programme:

- **Adapt to the pace of learning of older adults**, so that the training process suits the students' learning rhythms (they must control the time for the development of the tasks). We must make sure that time does not condition them in the search for motivations and needs, so the training actions fit their schedule, goals and expectations.
- It should be **ensured that learners are co-participants in their training process** to an extent that will depend of their commitment and effort. This will make them feel fundamental and necessary and will enhance their motivation.
- **Trainers must start from considering already acquired skills, abilities and competences of the learners.** This will strengthen their abilities (they have been learning all their lives and can continue to do so). These demands and their social role can be sources of motivation. Sometimes new experiences must produce positive results quickly to strengthen the trust.

Criteria of training programme:

- We have to **take into account learners' habits and study strategies**, as well as that older adults wish to feel useful in the society and their own family, The possibility to use what they have learned can become the motivator for learning
- **Start from their interests, needs and motivations.** We have to target clear objectives reachable by the elderly; providing, as far as possible, means and methods suitable to achieve them. Important, any of the objectives achieved in a short time will reinforce their self-confidence. Likewise, cognitive objectives should be combined with learning skills, attitude modification and habits.



Keep in mind that prior knowledge can lead to resistance to new learning; that's why the teacher has to ensure that older students emerge in the teaching process. So as each student is a reality already configured and different from his/her companions.

It is clear that the Programs for Seniors must have an agile structure that allows the needs and interests that appear in each of the situations. This structure must bear in mind the context, needing to keep a correspondence with all the academic programmes.

Digital Education

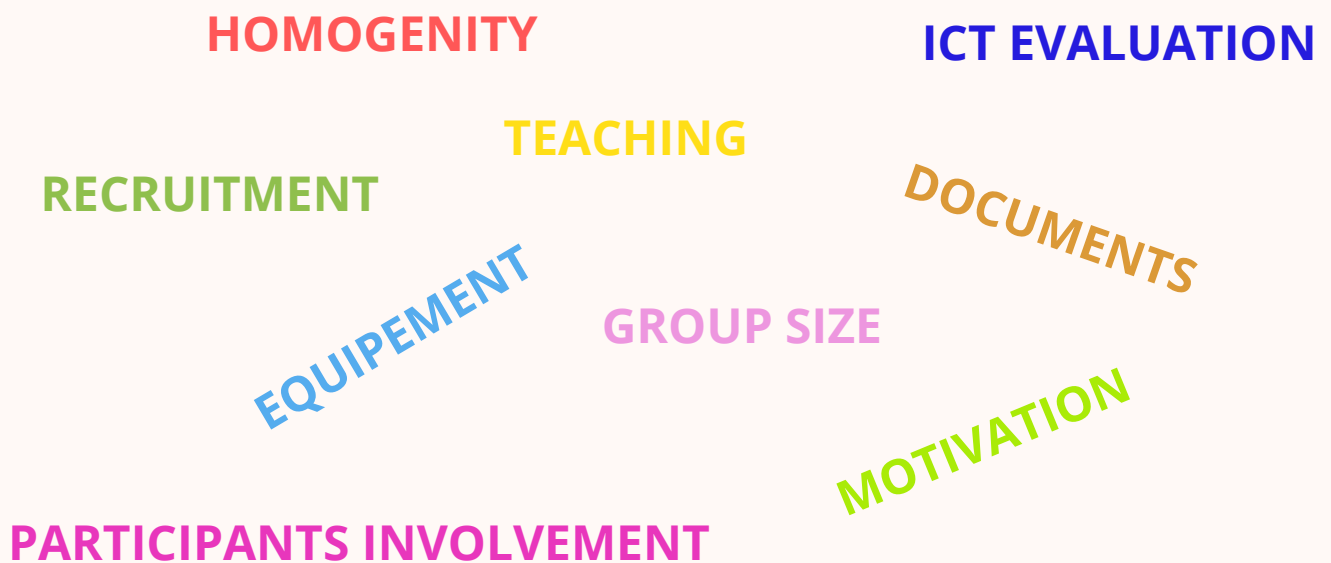


3 Digital Education

This section of the E-Book presents the benefits of digital education and the techniques to implement successful workshops taking into account the specificities of the target group, being the senior citizens.

Knowing how to interact with a digital device became fundamental to stay involved in the civil society. Most of administrative procedure can be accomplished online and some tools to take part in the democracy need, to be used, to have a faire ICT level. Basically, digital education has become one of the main challenge that our ageing societies are facing.

This section provides few tips identified by the trainers in order to deliver a quality training, specifically tailored for the needs of seniors:



Visual, hearing, memory or mobility issues can all be easily overcome with the use of ICT solutions. Moreover, they are more and more important to stay active in the society, especially when it comes to participation in the civil society. It is therefore crucial for the elderly to treat digital devices as allies rather than unknown enemies. We have created a list of practical recommendations for those willing to initiate learning programs for the elderly.

HOMOGENITY

This is a core principle of teaching ICT in group. We recommend to recruit participants with more or less the same ICT level

In order to ensure homogeneity, an online questionnaire can be created – this is not mandatory – to evaluate the group. We recommend the following questions:

1. *Do you own an ICT tool?*
2. *How many times per week do you use it?*
3. *What is the main activity you're carrying out with ICT?*
4. *What is your favourite device?(smartphone, laptop)*
5. *Do you use social networks?*

The program should be flexible based on learners skills and knowledge and readapted if necessary.



TEACHING

As explained in the chapter dedicated to adult education, the teaching approach should be *individualized*. For instance, if one of the participant is slower than the rest of the group, the trainer should focus on him/her and let the group test what was previously mentioned.

It is needed to take time and the information should be repeated several times in order to make sure that it has been understood by everyone. Trainers, therefore, need to be patient and attentive. The training should be practically oriented and related to everyday life situations. Avoid technical jargon and borrowings from English. Make sure to provide digital presentations of what they have learnt in order to allow participants to train at home and practice their new knowledge/skills. You can also add, in their favorite websites, the useful links.

Tips

Trainers and educators must be available for any question that might rise, participants should feel comfortable enough to ask you anything related to the training's content (e.g. there is no stupid question). Planning classes mind possible age related difficulties (memory, vision, hearing and mobility).

Seniors like to have **printed documents** so make sure to have the documents corresponding to the content of your session. They can print it or consult it online. Moreover, it will help them to re-produce the exercises at their homes.

DOCUMENTS

RECRUITMENT

The title/content of the workshop should be **attractive and connected** to the seniors' concerns/hobbies/points of interest. In order to do so, try to find topics that users feel close to. The minimum level to attend the training should be made clear before participants can register themselves. Participants should be available for the whole training not to be lost afterwards if they miss one session.

The group should **not exceed 10 participants with 2 trainers**. If the group is bigger, the number of trainers should be increased in order to keep a ratio of 1 trainer for 5 participants. This allows to provide a tailored training based on the needs of the trainees. It also permit to conduct training with an heterogeneous group in which all participants don't have the same ICT level.

GROUP SIZE

EQUIPEMENT

We recommend that participants **bring their own material** since users are accustomed to interact with their devices. But it is also important that the trainers provide devices to the participants who don't own any.

Don't hesitate to introduce former participants who have performed previous workshops in your organization and now have a fair ICT level.).

MOTIVATION



Participants should know that they can become trainers themselves; they can teach to the group new skills they learnt. Give yourself the opportunity to organize special events in order to motivate your group. Create a community rather than a random group of co-learners. Make students feel that learning is just one of the natural ways of spending time together.

Make sure that progress made by participants can be measurable (try to teach a new skill each time).

Provide a Certificate

PARTICIPANTS INVOLVEMENT

Participants should have a dedicated **tool to share their opinions/feelings about the training**. It can be just a document to be filled at the end of each session asking them what they liked the most, the least and what they would like to improve. They can create a blog, get involved in taking pictures and writing comments after each workshop.

Testimonies- Trainers

ESCAPE project was such an adventure!
It was super interested to exchange with
other trainers from Spain and Italy and to
see that we are facing the same challenges.
Seniors from Italy, Spain and France are
very similar and the trainers' skills need to
be the same:
patience, empathy and good mood are
required!

Anaïs

Testimonies- Trainers

"From my experience as a teacher for seniors in Paris with the association E-Seniors, I can say that teaching has more to do with being patient than teaching, that the learning curve is quite strong and that since there are no real tests the students have only self-motivation to motivate them outside of the classroom. I can argue that teaching seniors in Paris, I have to repeat a lot of information for the focus of most of our students is limited. They can get a though a lot of material and at the same time ask a question that was just explained. Like in any class situation there are always students that retain more than others and some get some technical aspects easier than others. But what is the most rewarding is when they have fun and really understand and apply what they have learned in their own life situations. This is why we at E-Seniors try our best to apply a curriculum that is based on real life in Paris, so our students only have an interest to listen and practice and learn. We ask our students to also help us develop a curriculum that is up to date with their needs and demands so that all the age groups have what they need to get the most out of our courses."

• **Palden**

"I have been a trainer several times for E-Seniors for a year. It has been a fulfilling experience: to be a part of this project, to help people from another generation and be able to learn them a bit more about ours, is not only interesting but also a great human experience. It works both ways: you teach them something that you know, but in exchange they give you a different kind of knowledge that you are not used to encounter. To work with seniors, you have to be patient and to really listen and pay attention to what they need in order to be able to understand the tools of modern society."

• **Chloé**

Testimonies- Trainers

"ESCAPE gave me the opportunity to work on a topic that I care so much about! I used to study law and political sciences and participation is very important to me. I noticed that these topics are also very important for seniors. Most of them didn't know that we could participate online in the democratic life and it was very good to be able to spread the word about these EU initiatives. I enjoyed preparing the digital quiz and it was a great reward to see that seniors are committed in the activity."

• **Ariane**

"The ESCAPE project has enabled me to compare myself with the other project partners on a subject that I particularly care about: information technology and active citizenship, through online participation in European democratic life. Being able to do this to a target audience of seniors participants, it allowed me meet their needs : their willing of have their voice be heard and their desire to improve their digital skills."

• **Luigi**

"The results obtained by working with the elderly, providing them with the tools to have their say at European level, have strengthened my belief that anyone, regardless of social background, age and previous experiences, can contribute to the construction of the future of Europe."

• **Evangelista**

Testimonies- Senior Learners

“With the
experience of life you have another
perspective”

Paco López, Spain

Testimonies- Senior Learners

• **Didier, France**

"I enjoyed myself very much during these workshops because I love to interact with people and I don't have so many opportunities in my everyday life. Therefore, these meetings were something that I really was looking for. I must say that my ICT skills were a bit too weak to be able to follow all the recommendations from the trainers but I have learnt a lot and I enjoy the digital quiz we had, it was very pleasant!"

• **Françoise, France**

"I had so much fun! I enjoyed the quizz, it was very funny and a nice way to spread the knowledge recently acquired! Count me in for the next sessions!"

• **Luisa, Italy**

"I hope that the course can be replicated with more participants so it can be useful to more people as it has been to me.

Moreover, if a higher level could be added in the future, it would be a great possibility for me to improve, thank you!"

• **Guy, France**

"I am a former journalist and I like very much the workshops carried out by E-Seniors. I have learnt a lot about EU. The European Union evolved a lot in the past years and it was fascinating to learn about it in an informal and friendly way. For me, now, this is the best way to learn new skills: I am too old to go back to school so I love attending informal workshops where young passionate trainers teach seniors new skills!"

Testimonies- Senior Learners

- **Paco, Spain**

"I am passionate about going to bed with the satisfaction of learning something new". I liked the atmosphere, the way they do things. My desire is to continue listening to new things and revolve in the old ones. The passion that teachers put with us, older students. Now as a student it is a different vision, than people younger than you are teaching. And that passion that can come to you really makes me excited. I think it is essential to study Philosophy, because it helps to think and behave. That is why it was one of the subjects he studied this year. In addition, to discover that it is also a way to rehearse and learn with the experiences of each person."

- **Angelina, Spain**

"I have many concerns, so when I retired I had so many things pending that I had to make a list. I have studied very varied subjects. Literary, History, Sociology, Archeology... I like it because teachers and the group are very fun, we go together with young students and it is very rich. We like to learn having fun. There is a circumstance that we learn from teachers, logically, but teachers learn from us. And that is the secret of this union working. I encourage everyone to come to this studies, it's just a matter. Especially people who retire, many do not know what to do with their time. Come to the University, here you spend hours without feeling."

Testimonies- Senior Learners

“ I always feared interacting with a computer,
I thought I was not being able, that I was too old
, thanks to this course I learned something new,
I will not be afraid anymore ! I'll try to keep practicing together with the people
I meet in this course ! ”

Rocco, Italy

Testimonies- Senior Learners

Antonio, Italy

"I follow all course because it was help informally, it was pleasant and not heavy, thanks to the exercises proposed by the trainer. I finally improved my writing speed!"

• Anne, France

"I am a political person and I am quite involved in the public issues so I knew about the European consultation. It was interesting to know how to access it but I must admit that I didn't learn so many hard skills so I was a bit disappointed; especially because the other people following the workshops didn't have strong ICT skills so the trainers had to spend some time explaining how to use the devices (computers, tablets etc.)"

• Maria, Italy

"I already knew how to use the pc. I used it for several years at work, but I was not aware of the tools offered by the EU for democratic participation. I learned how I can share my opinion with other people through online consultations!"

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